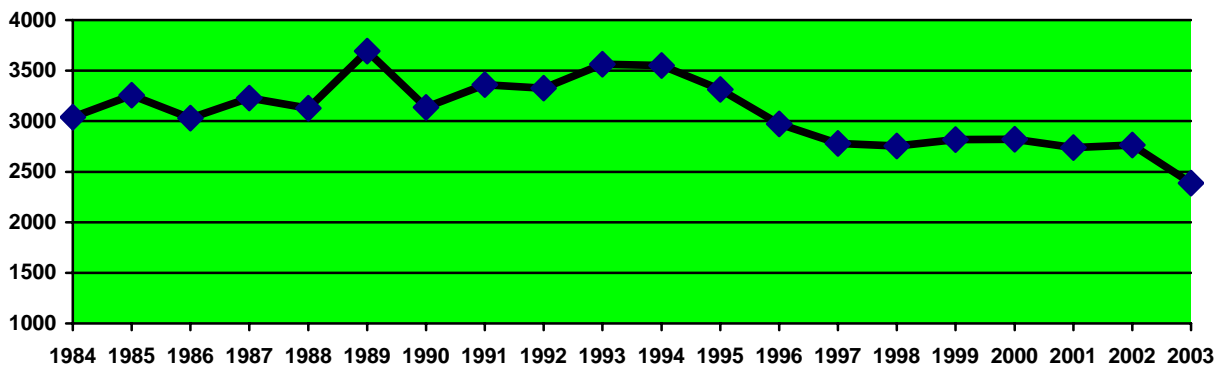


LARCENY

Larceny is the unlawful taking, carrying, leading, or riding away of property from the possession of another. It includes crimes such as shoplifting, pocket-picking, thefts from motor vehicles, thefts of auto parts and accessories, horse thefts, and bicycle thefts, in which no use of force, violence, fraud, or trespass occurs. In the Uniform Crime Reporting Program, this crime category does not include embezzlement, "con" games, forgery, and worthless checks. Motor vehicle theft is also excluded from this category, as it is a separate crime index offense.

**Twenty Year Review:
Larceny in Cambridge, 1984-2003**



2,764 reported in 2002 • 2,389 reported in 2003

Larceny is the most common "Index" or "Part I" crime, accounting for just over 60 percent of the serious crime total. Larceny often produces the most patterns. Numbers and patterns will undoubtedly remain high as we continue into the 21st century. The three categories that produced some of the highest numbers – larcenies from buildings, motor vehicles, and persons – are often fueled by changes in technology. As electronics such as laptops and cellular phones evolve, they become easier to steal, conceal, and ultimately sell. Despite the high number of incidents reported, it remains unclear how accurately this number reflects the actual number of larcenies committed. Larceny remains one of the most underreported crimes. The larceny total does not include incidents where victims did not bother to call the police, which may be due to the low value of the items stolen, and incidents where the larceny goes unnoticed.

Larceny is further broken down into the nine categories listed below. As can be seen from the table, there were significant decreases in larceny totals this year.

Categorization	2002	2003	% Change
Larcenies from Buildings	521	518	-1%
Larcenies from MV	748	657	-12%
Larcenies of Bicycles	264	212	-20%
Larcenies from Persons	394	331	-16%
Shoplifting	452	358	-21%
Larcenies of Services	26	24	-8%
Larcenies from Residences	203	183	-10%
Larcenies of License Plates	94	75	-20%
Other (Unclassifiable) Larcenies	62	31	-50%

LARCENY FROM BUILDINGS

Larcenies from Buildings are non-burglary thefts from commercial establishments. "Non-burglary" means that either the offender had a specific right to be on the premises, or that the building was open to the general public, and that no force was used to gain entry to the building where the theft was committed.

There were 518 larcenies from buildings reported this year. This total represents a forty percent decrease from totals reported almost a decade ago.

The following are the most common larceny from building scenarios:

1. A thief walks into an office building during open business hours, posing as a delivery person or claiming to be looking for an employee that does not exist. The thief moves unnoticed into an empty office and takes personal or company property. Credit cards and laptops are favorite targets. The thief then escapes unseen. This scenario accounted for 20% of the total reported.
2. An employee of a commercial establishment leaves his or her personal property in a "back room" where he or she thinks it will be safe or on a store counter. Later, they notice that the property is missing. 18% of incidents reported occurred in this manner.
3. A thief pries open a locker at a fitness club, targeting credit cards to be used afterwards at various commercial establishments. 13% of incidents reported occurred in this manner.
4. Someone leaves his or her belongings unattended for a short time, such as leaving a coat in a public coat closet, and then comes back to find the property missing. 12% of incidents reported occurred in this manner.
5. A thief lurks in a school hallway, waiting for the opportunity to steal property left unattended in classrooms or left unlocked in school desks or lockers. This scenario accounted for 6% of the total reported.
6. A thief finds him or herself in a situation where the opportunity arises to steal from a depository such as a safe or a cash register and the thief cannot resist. This scenario accounted for 6% of the total reported.

Geographic Breakdown by Business District

AREA	2002	2003
Galleria/East Cambridge	88	75
Kendall Square/MIT	52	45
Inman Square	30	29
Central Square	87	98
Cambridgeport/Riverside	25	16
Bay Square/Upper Broadway	34	41
Harvard Square	68	80
1500-1900 Mass. Ave.	34	42
Porter Square	37	31
Alewife/West Cambridge	66	61

Preventing Larcenies from Buildings

- Office buildings should develop a comprehensive security policy involving all employees. The policy should include a prohibition against leaving expensive equipment—particularly laptop computers—unattended. Employees should be encouraged to question suspicious or unfamiliar people, or to report them to the security department.
- Don't leave expensive personal property in health club lockers. A better solution is a "fanny pack" or other strap-on carrier that you can keep with you at all times.
- Retail establishments should provide individual lockers, with locks, for employee property. Leaving it behind the counter or in a "back room" is an invitation for theft.
- Take extreme care of your personal property while shopping and dining. Keep it in sight, and never leave it unattended, not even for a minute.
- Report all thefts, no matter how minor, to the police department. Greater reporting will allow us to identify and attack patterns and series of crime.

Top 5 Hot Spots of 2003

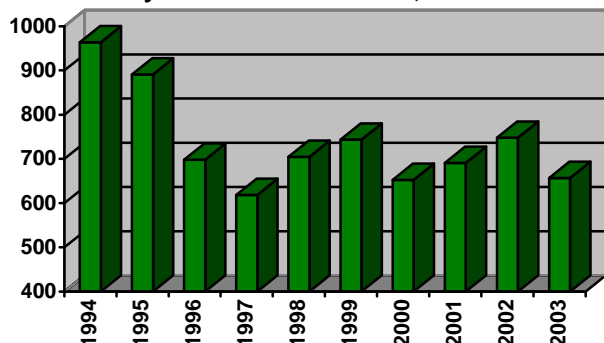
1. Cambridgeside Galleria Mall
100 Cambridgeside Place - 36 incidents
2. Bally's Health Club
1815 Mass. Ave. – 26 incidents
3. YMCA
820 Mass. Ave. – 13 incidents
4. Cambridge Rindge & Latin School
459 Broadway – 12 incidents

Charles Square Hotel Health Club
5 Bennett Street – 12 incidents
5. Cambridge Racquet & Fitness
215 First Street – 9 incidents

LARCENY FROM MOTOR VEHICLES

Larcenies from Motor Vehicles involve an offender either breaking into a car and stealing valuables within or stealing an exterior accessory (such as tires and hubcaps) from an automobile.

Larceny from Motor Vehicles, 1994-2003



Larcenies from motor vehicles typically rank among the top three subcategories of the crime of larceny. During the months of July and August of 2002, the Mid-Cambridge neighborhood experienced a dramatic increase in activity. In late August of 2002 several arrests were executed in Mid-Cambridge, which ended this pattern. Fortunately, the pattern did not re-emerge this summer, allowing for a twelve percent decrease overall in this subcategory and a thirty-three percent decrease in the Mid-Cambridge neighborhood. The Area 4 and Strawberry Hill neighborhoods also experienced a significant decrease this year in incidents. These decreases may be attributable to the incarceration of career criminals this year that hit multiple targets within specific geographic areas, driving up neighborhood totals. Although few larceny from motor vehicle patterns were reported, notable increases were noted this year in the East Cambridge and M.I.T. neighborhoods, which are discussed in further detail below.

Historical Perspective

- Larcenies from motor vehicles have consistently averaged between 16-20 percent of the total serious crime index in Cambridge for over 20 years. This year's total is consistent with this trend. Nationally, thefts from vehicles made up 20 percent of all crime reported by the Federal Bureau of Investigations.
- For the first five years of the 1980s, Cambridge averaged 1,050 larcenies from motor vehicles. This average increased to 1,175 per year between 1986 and 1990. Between 1990 and 1995, incidents leveled off to between 850 and 900 incidents per year.
- Throughout 1996, the Cambridge Police Department assigned high priority to the early interdiction of larceny from motor vehicle patterns. Target areas were flooded with directed patrols to combat chronic problem areas where spatial and temporal trends had been identified. The result of these efforts was the lowest larceny from motor vehicle total in 16 years. This number continued to decline in 1997.
- Since 1997, the total has fluctuated between 650 and 750 incidents.

East Cambridge: The East Cambridge larceny from motor vehicle total in 2003 was fueled by numerous sprees of incidents reported in the months of April, May, and September. No further sprees or patterns were reported in the last three months of the year.

- On April 23rd, five vehicles were broken into in the area of Gore Street and Second Street. The breaks occurred between 8:00 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. Entry was gained by smashing a window in each incident and guest parking passes and bags of various items were targeted. On the night of April 25th, four vehicles in the Bent Street and Second Street area were targeted. The breaks occurred during the same time as the April 23rd breaks and followed a similar pattern, i.e. windows broken and bags of items stolen.
- A third spree was reported between May 8th and May 10th. Six incidents were reported in the area of Rogers Street and First Street. Methods of entry and items targeted varied, but most of the breaks took place between 11:00 p.m. on Saturday and 1:00 a.m. on Sunday.

NEIGHBORHOOD	2002	2003
East Cambridge	112	129
MIT	15	28
Inman/Harrington	47	34
Area 4	86	50
Cambridgeport	76	80
Mid-Cambridge	129	87
Riverside	41	32
Agassiz	47	31
Peabody	50	44
West Cambridge	51	53
North Cambridge	62	63
Cambridge Highlands	15	16
Strawberry Hill	17	10

- On May 19th, five larcenies from motor vehicles were reported. Two occurred at the parking garage at 1 Kendall Square and two occurred at Bent and Third Streets. The incidents occurred between 12:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. and entry was gained in all of the incidents by smashing a window. Car stereos were taken in three of the incidents.
- In response to the increase in incidents in this neighborhood, the Cambridge Police Department decided to set up a decoy vehicle in mid-May in the hopes of catching the thieves responsible for the car breaks. The decoy vehicle was set up at Bent Street and Second Street on a Friday night. Shortly thereafter, two Dorchester men were witnessed smashing the decoy vehicle's window and taking a laptop from inside the car. They were arrested. No additional spree were reported over the summer.
- On September 4th, a spree of four larcenies from motor vehicles was committed in the Bent Street area. The breaks occurred on a Thursday afternoon around 3:00 in the afternoon. In each incident, entry was gained by smashing a window and car stereos were stolen, resulting in damage to the car dashboards. Five days later, on a Tuesday afternoon around 2:30, three more breaks were reported in the same area, which shared the same characteristics as the breaks committed on September 4th.

M.I.T.: Fourteen of the twenty-eight larcenies from motor vehicles that were reported in this neighborhood occurred on Vassar Street. Incidents were concentrated between the 200 and 300 block of Vassar Street and typically involved individuals forcing open door locks or breaking windows of parked cars and stealing car stereos. In late July, an M.I.T. student from Chicago was arrested after he was seen walking up and down Vassar Street, trying to break into parked cars. After this arrest the number of incidents reported in this neighborhood declined until the month of November in which Vassar Street again became a hotspot for larcenies from motor vehicles.

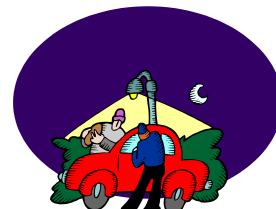
Top Ten Stolen Items of 2002

1. Car Stereos/CD players – 175 reported stolen
2. CDs/Tapes – 78 reported stolen
3. Cellular Telephones – 59 reported stolen
4. Cash – 46 reported stolen
5. Laptop Computers – 42 reported stolen
6. Misc. Car Parts– 41 reported stolen
7. Clothing – 38 reported stolen
8. Coins – 34 reported stolen
9. Portable CD player – 30 reported stolen
10. Backpack – 21 reported stolen



The Top Three Methods of Entry

1. The most common method of entry into motor vehicles is by breaking one or more windows of the vehicle. This method was reported in 39 percent of the incidents.
2. The second most common method of entry into motor vehicles is through a door left temporarily unlocked by the owner of the car. This method was reported in 9 percent of the incidents.
3. The third most common method of entry into motor vehicles is by breaking the door lock to the car and forcing entry. This method was reported in 7 percent of the incidents.

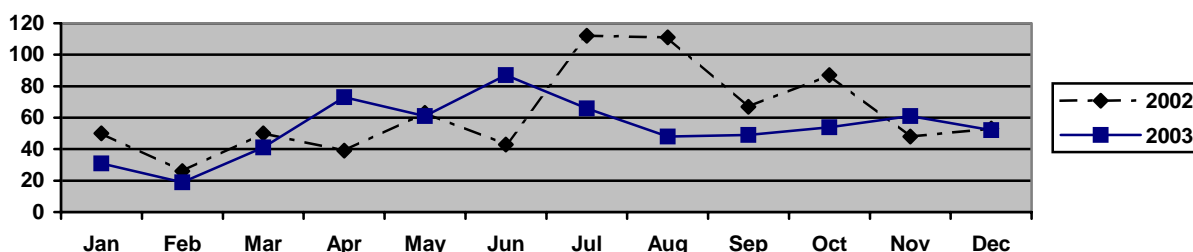


Preventing Larcenies from Motor Vehicles

The best and really only way to prevent larcenies from motor vehicles is never to leave valuables in your car unattended—particularly electronic goods such as cellular telephones and laptop computers. Preventing the theft of car radios is more difficult; some car stereo manufacturers make detachable faceplates or stereos that pull easily from the dashboard, allowing you to take it with you or lock it in the trunk.

Parking your car in a driveway or lot rather than on the street provides some minimal deterrence.

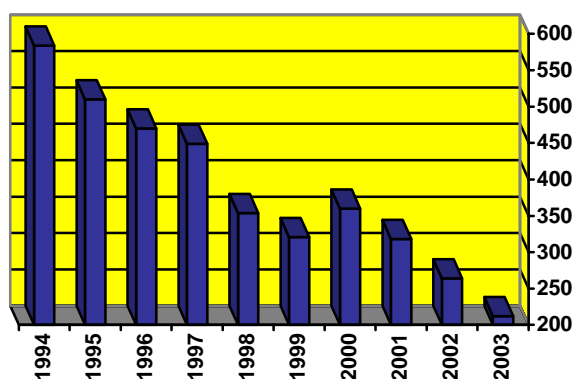
Monthly Totals for Larceny from Motor Vehicles



LARCENY OF BICYCLES

For the third consecutive year, larceny of bicycles declined in Cambridge. Between 1989 and 1994, bicycle theft exhibited a sharp ascent, soaring from an average of 270 per year in the 1980s to 584 in 1994. Since 1994, the crime has been steadily decreasing, with the exception of the slight increase reported in 2000. These declines reflect, perhaps, the increased publicity given to this crime, the greater availability of bicycle racks, and a crime-prevention conscious public. (The Cambridge Police Department's bicycle theft statistics do not include thefts reported to the MIT or Harvard University Police Departments. These additional thefts could add several hundred to the theft total.)

Bicycle Larceny, 1994-2003



About 62 percent of bicycle thefts fell between May and September, when bicycles pack the streets and sidewalks. The highest number of thefts was reported in the month of July. They occurred most often between 2:00 P.M. and 6:00 P.M. In approximately half the incidents reported in July, the stolen bicycles had locks on them at the time of theft. Locks present little difficulty to bicycle thieves, who often bring bolt cutters or pry bars with them.

BUSINESS DISTRICT	2002	2003
Galleria/East Cambridge	16	17
Kendall Square/MIT	10	14
Inman Square/Harrington	29	32
Central Square	63	37
Cambridgeport/Riverside	21	10
Bay Square/Upper Broadway	28	32
Harvard Square	30	21
1500-1900 Mass. Ave.	26	18
Porter Square/North Cambridge	21	17
Alewiffe/West Cambridge	20	14

Last year, Central Square led the city in the highest number of incidents. This year, incidents seem spread out more evenly among the business districts, leading to a significant decrease in incidents in the Central Square business district. Most of the bicycles stolen were locked at various locations along city streets. The only repeat location reported was outside of the Cambridge Rindge & Latin School on Broadway. Five bicycles were stolen this year from that location.

Preventing Bicycle Theft

The facts are grim: *no* lock will stop a determined bicycle thief. However, using a lock is better than not using a lock, and you can maximize the protection a lock provides by: 1) using a steel "U" lock rather than a cable lock; 2) locking the *frame* of the bicycle rather than the tire; and 3) locking your bike at a bicycle rack.

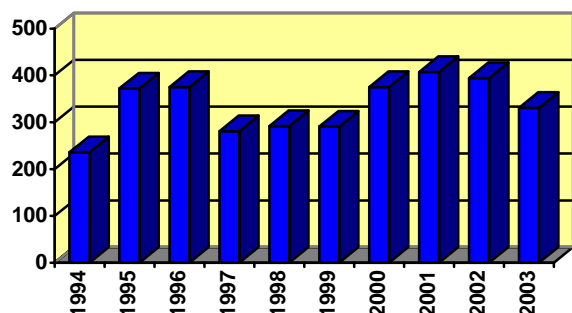
Register your bicycle with the Cambridge Police Department. If your bike is stolen and recovered, it will be easier to find you and return your bicycle. Registration cards are available at the Cambridge Police Department and at bicycle shops across the city. Call 349-3236 for more information.

Removing an essential part of the bicycle, such as the seat or one of the wheels, and taking it with you provides some protection against theft. *Don't* assume your bicycle is safe because it is in your yard, on your porch, or in your apartment hallway. Bikes should be locked in a secured area, such as a garage or shed.

LARCENY FROM THE PERSON

Larceny from the Person describes pocket-picking or any theft that occurs within the victim's area of control. The thefts are non-confrontational, and usually the victim is not aware of the theft until after it has occurred. If any confrontation between offender and victim takes place, the crime is recorded as a Robbery.

Larceny from the Person, 1994-2003



takes the coat or purse entirely. This accounts for forty-three percent of larcenies from the person. Incidents at restaurants and cafes located in Harvard and Central Square dominated this categorization. Concentrations were reported at The Garage in Harvard Square and between the 500 to 700 blocks of Mass. Ave. in Central Square. The Cambridgeside Galleria also was a hotspot for this crime. Larcenies from person are generally easy to prevent. Remember to always keep your belongings within your control. Do not leave purses on the floor, on the back of your chair, or otherwise unattended. Do not leave wallets or cell phones in the pockets of hanging coats.

- While the victim is walking through a public place, a pickpocket stealthily reaches into the victim's coat, purse, or backpack and removes valuables. This scenario accounted for about ten percent of the larceny from the person reports in 2003, but this percentage is ever decreasing. Pocket-picking requires a particular skill that modern criminals are increasingly failing to develop. Harvard Square and Central Square report the highest pocket-picking numbers, with concentrations between noon and 6:00 P.M.
- A shopper, usually in a supermarket, keeps her purse in her shopping cart. While she is distracted selecting merchandise, someone pilfers the purse from the cart. This accounts for about twenty-one percent of reported thefts. The highest concentrations were at the Cambridgeside Galleria, the Star Market in Porter Square, and the retail stores along Alewife Brook Parkway.

Typically, larcenies from persons dominate the larceny subcategories. However, in 2003, the larceny from person total fell into the fourth highest position. Thefts from people shopping and dining in Harvard Square and the Cambridgeside Galleria drove this total. Eight arrests were made this year of individuals stealing from unsuspecting restaurant and retail patrons.

The following represents three recurring scenarios that dominate larcenies from persons:

- A diner places his or her jacket over the back of a chair, or places her purse under her chair. Someone sitting behind the victim goes through the coat or purse, taking the valuables within, or

BUSINESS DISTRICT	2002	2003
Galleria/East Cambridge	37	48
Kendall Square/MIT	14	9
Inman Square/Harrington	7	14
Central Square	81	99
Cambridgeport/Riverside	11	7
Bay Square/Upper Broadway	10	7
Harvard Square	147	100
1500-1900 Mass. Ave.	17	11
Porter Square/North Cambridge	24	15
Alewife/West Cambridge	46	21

SHOPLIFTING

Shoplifting incidents decreased significantly from 2003. The Cambridgeside Galleria and Central Square reported the most incidents, but were down significantly from last year. It is important to note however, that since shoplifting incidents are generally only reported when an arrest is made, underreporting may be a serious problem. The actual shoplifting number may be six to ten times the statistic given in this report. Police made arrests in 358 shoplifting incidents in 2003.

BUSINESS DISTRICT	2002	2003
Galleria/East Cambridge	150	118
Kendall Square/MIT	1	3
Inman Square/Harrington	6	8
Central Square	104	75
Cambridgeport/Riverside	11	10
Bay Square/Upper Broadway	3	4
Harvard Square	79	77
1500-1900 Mass. Ave.	7	9
Porter Square/North Cambridge	31	19
Alewife/West Cambridge	60	35

Shoplifters usually fall into one of five categories:

1. **Juvenile Shoplifters** who steal on a dare, to impress their peers, to get an “adrenaline rush,” or to compensate for lack of money.
2. **Impulse Shoplifters** who seize a sudden chance, such as an unattended dressing room or a blind aisle. Sometimes, the “impulse” is a long line or sudden lack of money.
3. **Alcoholics, vagrants, and drug addicts**, who steal erratically and clumsily. When caught, this type of shoplifter is more likely than others to get violent (see “Shop Owner/Patron” assaults in the Assault section).
4. **Kleptomaniacs** who steal to satisfy a psychological need.
5. **Professionals**, who steal expensive items and resell them to fences or “flea markets.”

Preventing Shoplifting

- Greet and serve customers promptly. Shoplifters do not want your attention.
- If you suspect someone has “pocketed” merchandise, engage them in conversation for a few minutes. They may “ditch” the merchandise as soon as you leave them alone.
- Sales personnel should have a full view of the sales floor area. Rearrange displays, shelving, and lighting to eliminate blind spots.
- Keep displays neat and tidy.
- Be aware of people wearing loose, baggy clothing, carrying shopping bags or large handbags, or customers under the influence of drugs and alcohol.
- Request a commercial survey from one of the Cambridge Police Department’s certified Crime Prevention Officers at 617-349-6009.

LARCENY FROM RESIDENCES

Larcenies from Residences are non-burglary thefts from apartments, hallways, garages, and yards. “Non-burglary” means that no force or trespass was involved in the theft: the thefts are committed by people who have the right to be on the property. They include thefts committed by guests, roommates, family members, workers, and home health care providers. They also include thefts committed from common areas of apartment buildings, and thefts committed from property surrounding a house, such as the front yard, walkway, or tool shed.

Since larcenies from residences are usually committed by someone known to the victim, pattern identification and intervention by the police department is difficult. The most common larceny from residence scenarios are:

- Thefts committed by visitors or guests to a residence: 25%
- Thefts committed by someone working in the apartment, such as a painter, plumber, contractor, or maintenance man: 19%
- Thefts from a common hallway, foyer, or storage area of an apartment building: 14%
- Thefts from a yard, porch, or other area surrounding a residence: 14%.
- Thefts of mail or packages delivered by a parcel service: 12%
- Thefts committed by a family member, spouse, or romantic partner (i.e., “domestic thefts”): 12%

NEIGHBORHOOD	2002	2003
East Cambridge	19	18
MIT	1	0
Inman/Harrington	13	10
Area 4	19	23
Cambridgeport	27	26
Mid-Cambridge	25	32
Riverside	20	14
Agassiz	10	7
Peabody	28	15
West Cambridge	16	14
North Cambridge	19	15
Cambridge Highlands	2	2
Strawberry Hill	4	7

LARCENY OF SERVICES

This crime includes taxicab fare evasion, “dining and ditching,” “gassing and going,” and other failures to pay for services already rendered. There were 24 of these crimes reported in 2003. The majority of incidents involved taxicab fare evasion (50%), restaurant check evasion (21%) and larceny of gasoline (17%). The remainder of the incidents involved an owner who stole their own automobile from a service garage to avoid paying his repair bill (4%), an individual who claimed to be a guest of a hotel and charged services to another guest’s room and then fled (4%), and an individual who fled a parking garage without paying (4%).